

**Township of Teaneck**

**Municipal Open Space, Recreation, and Historic Preservation Trust Fund Advisory Board**

**Annual Report**

**October 2019**

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The 2007 Open Space and Recreation Plan recommends protection of critical environmental and historical resources, acquisition of land for preservation, an outlined system of greenways to connect isolated open space resources, and creation of an open space and recreational resource network. The Open Space and Recreation Plan was updated in 2019 to keep up with Teaneck's growing needs through proposed strategies to implement these goals and recommendations. The Municipal Open Trust Fund Committee updated these goals in an effort to continue its dedication to the acquisition, development, maintenance, purchase of historic properties for preservation purposes, and payment of debt services for any of these purposes. The Municipal Trust Fund was most recently renewed on November 8, 2016 via a referendum on the ballot, maintaining a tax levy of \$.01 per \$100 of assessed value. As of December 2018, the balance of MOST was \$1,606,700 and the amount raised through tax levy was \$506,700.

The Township's submission of the original 2007 Open Space and Recreation Plan and adoption of the municipal tax levy qualified Teaneck for the Green Acres Planning Incentive grant program that matches 50%. To keep up with Teaneck's rapid development in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and fully utilize every piece of land, Green Acres grant funding was used to fund small pieces of land beginning in the 1960s. Although the Township was awarded \$500,000 in a matching grant from the Green Acres in 2011, it was forfeited due to a lack of active land acquisition projects and therefore had to withdraw from the program. Bond financing gave Teaneck the flexibility to make improvements to the Votee Park Turf Field and begin construction of the Votee Park Splash Pad and Votee Park Field House. Although Teaneck continues to develop, it falls below the federal and state standards for open and recreational space.

Preserving open space and having a variety of different types of recreational facilities is a key contributing factor to the quality of life in suburban communities. Improving and upgrading facilities at various parks as well as getting the Teaneck Community more involved in recommendations for the Route 4 Greenbelt and other municipal parks and recreational spaces plays an essential role in enhancing the quality of life for present and future Teaneck residents.

In August 2017, one of our members who was appointed as one of the two members at large, resigned from the board. The board respectfully requests Council to seek and appoint an interested resident to fill this volunteer position. As stated in the original resolution, this person cannot be currently serving in a volunteer capacity within the Township.

The Board currently consists of:

- One member from the Environmental Commission, selected by that Commission,
- One member from the Parks, Playgrounds and Recreation Advisory Board, selected by the Board,
- One member from the Historic Preservation Commission, selected by that Commission,
- Two staff members as determined by the Municipal Manager (Recreation Superintendent and Township Engineer or their designee) and
- One of two members from the public at large.

**TASKS OF THE OPEN SPACE, RECREATION, & HISTORIC PRESERVATION TRUST FUND ADVISORY BOARD:**

1. Provide Council with recommendations as to how the funds should be allocated among the various types of projects, for Council consideration.
2. Provide Council with a recommendation as to whether there should be an annual cap of fund allocations.
3. Provide Council with input on various proposed projects for fund utilization, seeking input from various groups throughout the Township including other existing advisory boards, committees, and task forces, statutory boards and commissions, organized sports organizations and other community groups.

**MOST BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Acquisition of Open Space.
2. Adopt the Open Space and Recreation Plan Update as part of the Master Plan.
3. Submit the Open Space and Recreation Plan Update to the Green Acres program at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.
4. Replace the Member-at-Large on the MOST Committee to ensure the board is at full capacity.
5. Relocate the Hockey Rink previously located in Votee Park to another park in town.
6. Complete a Feasibility Study for improving and upgrading facilities at Argonne Park, as recommended at the July 9, 2019 Council meeting and the July 18, 2019 Planning Board meeting.
7. Develop a plan for engaging local and community recommendations on the future of the Route 4 Greenbelt.
8. Reach out to residents to provide continued dialogue on the future improvements to municipal parks and recreational areas, expand outreach initiatives to include various social media platforms to capture a diverse demographic of community members.
9. Examine Township-owned properties for placement on the Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI), to ensure their permanent protection as open space. This includes the properties along the Route 4 Greenbelt. Resolve any inconsistencies in the ROSE with NJDEP and the Township professional staff, including the Engineer, Planner, and Superintendent of Recreation.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Glenna D. Crockett, CPRP, R.A.  
Co-Chair, Municipal Open Space Trust

c: MOST